

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 282137Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7731

AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 2301

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO SA US UR

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE-TALK WITH KING

1. RIFAI CALLED ME SHORTLY AFTER 8:00 PM APRIL 28 AND ASKED TO PICK ME UP. CONFIRMED THAT HE WANTED TO TAKE ME TO SEE KING. IN CAR ON WAY OVER HE MENTIONED THAT CROWN PRINCE HAD COME BACK FROM SAUDI ARABIA THIS EVENING JUST A FEW MINUTES BEFORE HE CALLED ME. ALSO SAID HASSAN HAD MET WITH AMBASSADOR PORTER IN JIDDA THIS EVENING.

2. WE WENT TO CROWN PRINCE'S HOUSE AND FOUND HIM TALKING WITH KING. KING THEN BEGAN BY REVIEWING FOR ME SITUATION AS IT HAD DEVELOPED OVER LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS. HE NOTED THAT MOST RECENTLY WE HAD ASKED HIM TO BE PATIENT WHILE THE ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED WITH THE SAUDIS. CONTRACTS RAN OUT ON APRIL 30 AND THEREFORE AFTER THAT DEADLINE PASSED HE HAD NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT TO GO TO THE SOVIETS. HE WANTED US SYSTEM BUT HE DID NOT WANT TO GET INTO A POSITION WHERE HE GOT HALF OF WHAT HE NEEDED AND THEN THE WHOLE DEAL COLLAPSED AND HE HAD TO BEGIN OVER AGAIN. WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT WAS THE 14 HAWKS AND 100 VULCANS AND THE EQUIPMENT WE BOTH AGREED WAS NECESSARY TO OPERATE IT.

3. HE THEN NOTED THAT CROWN PRINCE HASSAN HAD GONE TO SAUDI ARABIA WITH INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO RAISE THE ISSUE. HOWEVER THE SAUDIS WOULD

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NOT TALK TO HIM ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE. THE MATTER HAD BEEN RAISED

IN HIS MEETING WITH KING KHALID AND PRINCE FAHD AND HE HAD TALKED TO THE OTHER PRINCES ABOUT THE QUESTION. THE SAUDIS TOLD HASSAN ACCORDING TO THE KING THAT THEY WERE READY TO FUND WHAT THE JORDANIANS NEEDED BUT IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE THE AMERICANS WANTED TO GUARANTEE SOME OF THE FUNDING THAT THEY (THE SAUDIS) DID NOT FUND THE WHOLE DEAL. THIS BROUGHT ON A CERTAIN SKEPTICAL LAUGHTER AMONG THE GROUP. KING CONTINUED THAT THE SAUDIS INDICATED THEY WERE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT ANY SOVIET PRESENCE IN JORDAN AND SEEMED CONVINCED ABOUT KING'S DETERMINATION TO GO TO THE SOVIETS IF HE COULD NOT GET WHAT HE NEEDED IN THE PRESENT DEAL. CROWN PRINCE, KING SAID HAD REAFFIRMED KING'S INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD.

4. KING SAID ALSO THAT SAUDIS HAD SEEMED GREATLY CONFUSED ABOUT THE RECENT EXCHANGE IN CORRESPONDENCE. SAUDIS HAD ASSUMED THAT WHAT THE KING SAID WAS GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN THE AMERICAN CONTRACTS RUN OUT ON APRIL 30 WAS A DECISION WHICH JORDANIANS HAD ALREADY MADE FOUR OR FIVE DAYS AGO UNRELATED TO APRIL 30. CROWN PRINCE KING SAID WAS ABLE TO REASSURE THEM ALL THAT JORDANIANS WERE WAITING TO HEAR FROM THE US AND THAT AS FAR AS THEY WERE CONCERNED THERE WAS NOTHING MORE FOR THEM TO SAY BUT THAT THEY WERE READY AND INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM THE US ON ITS CONVERSATIONS WITH SAUDIS.

5. KING ADDED THAT IN CROWN PRINCE'S CONVERSATIONS SAUDI CONTRIBUTION OF \$500 MILLION WAS MENTIONED, WITH THE US ASSISTING IN GUARANTEEING THE SECOND PHASE. ALSO KING INDICATED THAT CROWN PRINCE HAD HAD VERY GOOD TALK THIS EVENING WITH AMBASSADOR PORTER IN JIDDA AND THAT POSSIBILITY OF A REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE SET UP HAS BEEN MENTIONED. CROWN PRINCE AND RIFAI THEN BOTH MENTIONED THE IDEA AND SAID THAT IF THAT WAS REQUIRED TO GET SAUDIS TO COME ALONG WITH THE DEAL THE IDEA HAD MERIT AND SHOULD BE TRIED OUT BY ALL MEANS.

6. KING THEN SAID THAT HE FEELS HE FACES OVERWHELMING PROBLEMS OF DEFENSE. HE SEES EVERY COUNTRY AROUND HIM BALLOONING ITS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WHILE THE US AND SYRIA ARE BEING INUNDATED AS ARE THE IRAQIS, BY THE SOVIETS WITH NEW ARMS. HE CANNOT TAKE ON THE ISRAELIS BUT HE FACES A MAJOR PROBLEM WITH HIS PEOPLE AND HIS ARMY WITHOUT AIR DEFENSE AND HE WILL NOT LET THEM DOWN. HE ALSO SAID THAT IN 1970 HE ALWAYS HAD THE IDEA IN A SECRET

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CORNER OF HIS MIND THAT IF HE TOOK ON THE FEDAYEEN AND GOT IN DEEP TROUBLE THE US WOULD BE THERE TO HELP HIM. NOW HE WAS NOT SURE AND THIS WAS UPSETTING HIM GREATLY. FINALLY THERE WERE ALL THE OTHER MILITARY SUPPLY PROBLEMS WHICH HE HAD RAISED WITH ME A WEEK OR SO AGO PARTICULARLY THE ISSUE OF WHERE WE WERE GOING IN THE FUTURE.

7. IN REPLY I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS WITHOUT DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS ON A DEAL WITH SAUDIS AND AS HE HAD PROBABLY FIGURED OUT WE WERE WORKING WITH THE SAUDIS ON A PHASED APPROACH TO PAYMENT FOR THE SYSTEM THAT HE HAD IN MIND. SINCE THE PAYMENTS FOR THE FULL SYSTEM COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF TIME, THIS HAD ALWAYS SEEMED TO FIT IN WITH THE NOTION OF PHASED FUNDING. ON THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE US WOULD DO IF HE WERE ATTACKED I SAID I FELT SURE AFTER OUR WASHINGTON TRIP THAT I COULD SPEAK FOR THE PRESIDENT AND TELL HIM CLEARLY THAT HIS STANDING AND STATUS WITH US HAD NOT CHANGED. IF HE WAS CONCERNED THAT WE COULD NOT GIVE A GREEN LIGHT FOR SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON HE SAID THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM HAS OLDER, MORE SOLIDLY BUILT AND BASED ON A WIDER AND DEEPER UNDERSTANDING THAN THAT WITH SYRIA. FURTHER HE COULD COUNT ON OUR DOING FOR HIM NOW WHAT WE DID IN 1970 UNDER THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SHOULD NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR CONSTANCY AS A FRIEND IN SUCH SITUATIONS. AS FOR THE QUESTION OF LONGER TERM MILITARY PLANNING, I HAD RECOMMENDED TO WASHINGTON THAT WE NOT MOVE INTO THAT SUBJECT WITH HIM UNTIL WE GOT THE AIR DEFENSE ISSUE OUT OF THE WAY. THAT REMAINED OUR FIRST PRIORITY. BUT ON THE BASIS OF OUR DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON I FELT SURE HE WOULD CONTINUE TO GET A SYMPATHETIC HEARING ON THESE ISSUES OF OUR FUTURE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP.

8. KING SEEMED RELIEVED. HE SAID THAT HE HAD WANTED US TO KNOW ABOUT THE CROWN PRINCESTRIP AND THAT WE STILL HAD A FEW DAYS LEFT. HE CERTAINLY HOPED THE WHOLE QUESTION COULD BE WORKED OUT BEFORE THE GUILLIOTINE FELL ON OUR HEADS WITH THE CUT OFF ON THE US SIDE IN THE CONTRACTS.

9. CROWN PRINCE THEN SPOKE UP. HE SAID THAT SAUDIS SEEMED PREOCCUPIED WITH THE MISSILE QUESTION. THEY STILL WERE CONFUSED OVER THE PACKAGE AND THE AMOUNTS. HOWEVER RASHAD PHARAON HAD SPOKEN TO THE JORDANIANS AMBASSADOR ABOUT THEIR BEING WILLING TO COME UP
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WITH \$500 MILLION, AND IF THE PROCESS GOT STARTED AND THE US WAS UNABLE TO HELP HE FELT SURE THE SAUDIS WOULD BE MORALLY OBLIGATED TO MAKE WHATEVER PAYMENTS CAME DUE ON THE WHOLE SYSTEM. HE THEN NOTED THAT KHALID AND FAHD WERE SUPPORTIVE. HE HAD A LONG SESSION WITH FAHD ON THE ISSUE AND SUGGESTED THAT FAHD COME TO AMMAN AND SEE THE KING. FAHD SAID HE

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 2301

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WOULD LIKE TO DO SO, BUT WOULD NOT COME WITHOUT SOMETHING IN HAND. HE SAID THAT THE ISSUE WAS MOVING FAVORABLY BUT THAT HE HAD TO TALK WITH SOME MORE OF HIS ADVISORS.

10. CROWN PRINCE ALSO SAID THAT "MY FRIEND" THE PRIME MINISTER CAME IN FOR A ROUGH DRUBBING FROM THE SAUDIS FOR HIS PART IN THE ARRANGEMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE THOUGH THERE WAS SOME REAL MERIT IN THE IDEA OF A REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT AND HE URGED IN VIEW OF THE DEADLINE THAT AMBASSADOR PORTER TRY TO SEE FAHD TOMORROW APRIL 29 AND NAIL THE WHOLE BUSINESS DOWN. HE SAID THAT FAHD LEFT HIM WITH HE IMPRESSION THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE AND THAT HE (HASSAN) FELT THAT THE REGIONAL IDEA MIGHT APPEAL TO THE SAUDIS AS A WAY OF ESCAPING FROM THEIR PRESENT EMBARRASSMENT HAVING TO CHANGE THE FIGURES.

11. RIFAI THEN CHIMED IN WITH HIS VIEWS. HE SAID THAT HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT FAHD WAS VERY FAVORABLE TO THE DEAL. BUT NEVER VERY PRECISE ON DATES AND FIGURES. IN ADDITION HE FELT THAT THE SAUDI WERE EITHER EMBARRASSED BY THE NOTION THAT THEY HAD ONLY GIVEN SADAT \$300 MILLION

ON HIS LAST TRIP AND COULD THEREFORE NOT GIVE JORDAN MORE OR ALTERNATIVELY THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD PERHAPS SUGGESTED THAT THE SAUDIS NOT GIVE MORE BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON BETWEEN SYRIA AND JORDAN. AT THIS POINT CROWN PRINCE SAID THAT IN ONE OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SAUDIS ONE OF THE PRINCES REMARKED THAT SAUDIS WERE WORKING HARD TO BRING THE IRAQIS ALONG ON A MORE SENSIBLE COURSE AND JORDAN WAS WORKKING ON SYRIA AND THE LAST THING SAUDI

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ARABIA WANTED WAS TO HAVE THE RUSSIANS IN AMMAN. CROWN PRINCE WAS THE PRESSED ABOUT WHETHER KING WOULD REALLY GO TO THE RUSSIANS. WHEN HE SAID THAT KING WASREADY TO DO SO IF HE HAD NO OTHER

CHOICE, SAUDIS SAID THAT END RESULT WOULD PROBABLY BE END OF THE KING.

HASSAN CLAIMED THAT HE REPLIED THAT HE LEAST OF ALL NEEDED NO CONVINCING ON THAT POINT AND THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY MEAN THE END OF KING KHALID TOO, GESTURING HE SAID IN KHALID'S DIRECTION WITH KHALID AND NODDING IN AGREEMENT.

12. HASSAN ADDED HE FELT THAT FAHD INDICATED A GREAT RESPECT FOR AMBASSADOR PORTER AND WAS FROM HASSAN'S OBSERVATION GENUINELY DEDICATED TO WORKING SOMETHING OUT. HASSAN SAID HE WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY AMBASSADOR PORTER'S INDICATION THAT HE BELIEVED SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT.

13. AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION I TOLD THE KING I WOULD REPORT IN DETAIL OUR TALK AND SEEK A REACTION FROM THE DEPARTMENT.

14. JORDANIANS ARE BREATHING EASIER AFTER HASSAN'S VISIT BUT ARE GENUINELY CONFUSED OVER WHERE THINGS NOW STAND. FOLLOWING THE MEETING RIDING BACK TO THE OFFICE WITH RIFAI IN THE CAR HE INDICATED TO ME THAT HE THOUGHT THE PHASED APPROACH MADE A GOOD BIT OF SENSE AND THAT WE OUGHT TO LOOK INTO THE REGIONAL IDEA IF IT WOULD HELP THE SAUDIS. FURTHER IF THE SAUDIS WERE SENSITIVE ABOUT SOME PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THEIR SIDE ABOUT AMOUNTS HE HOPED THAT WE COULD HELP BY TAKING A ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF SOME KIN. HE JOINED HASSAN IN URGING THAT WE SEE FAHD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND SAID HE HOPED CROWN PRINCE'S VISIT HAD CLEARED THE AIR ON JORDANIANS' INTENTIONS. FURTHER I SAID TO HIM THAT IF SAUDIS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO US THURSDAY OR FRIDAY WE MAY HAVE TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT POSTPONING DOD ON THE CONTRACTS. HE SEEMED INTERESTED IN THAT IDEA AS A WAY OF BUYING MORE TIME TO BRING THE SAUDIS ALONG PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE REPORT BY THE CROWN PRINCE OF THE HELPFUL AND COOPERATIVE SAUDI REACTION.

15. AS FAR AS REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE IS CONCERNED ONE IDEA WE HAVE CONSIDERED HERE AT SOME LENGTH IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MAJOR DEPOT REPAIR AND CHECK OUT FACILITIES (DSU AND TRMF) FOR BOTH JORDANIANS AND SOME OF THE SAUDI

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IMPROVED HAWKS COULD BE BUILT BY SAUDI ARABIA AND LOCATED AT TABUK. SINCE THE MISSILES AND EQUIPMENT CAN BE TRANSPORTED THERE BY C-130 OR BY TRUCK FROM JORDAN FOR REPAIR AND SINCE SUCH A FACILITY COULD PLAY LITTLE OR NO ROLE IN AN ACTIVE WAR. JORDANIANS MIGHT FIND SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT OF INTEREST. IF SAUDI USED THE FACILITY IT ALSO MIGHT BE OF ENOUGH DIRECT BENEFIT TO THEM TO PAY FOR. JORDAN WILL PROBABLY HAVE MORE TECHNICIANS TRAINED SOONER THAN SAUDI ARABIA AND COULD PROVIDE MOST OF THE PERSONNEL FOR THE FACILITY THEREBY ENSURING THAT THE WORK ON THEIR OWN MISSILES MET THEIR NEEDS. THIS ITEM (DSU)

TOGETHER WITH THE TRMF (THEATRE READINESS MISSILE FACILITY)
COSTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF \$60M AND IS PLACED BY US CURRENT ON
THE SECOND PHASE. WE WILL REVIEW OTHER ITEMS TO SEE IF THERE IS
ANYTHING ELSE THAT CAN BE APPROACH A REGIONAL
CAST IF THIS MAKES SENSE FROM DEPARTMENTS AND JIDDA'S POINT OF
VIEW.
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